

# Prairie Chickens

To his own Prairie Chicks, with a smile and a tear,  
With fondest of love from their own Chanticleer;  
With the heart's best affections and blessings to each,  
In thoughts past the skill of articulate speech.

BY  
CHANTICLEER



“US.”

(p. 31)

[G. F. Joy]

# PRAIRIE CHICKENS

BY  
CHANTICLEER

IN MEMORIAM

G. E. S.

AN envoy from the Court of Love,  
A royal embassy;  
A tribute-offering to prove  
The Heart's fidelity.

LONDON:  
ARTHUR H. STOCKWELL,  
6 & 7 CREED LANE, LUDGATE HILL, E.C.  

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1908.

PR6019  
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Joy, G P

A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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Come, speak ye, my Chickens, and tell me,  
Who bade you God-speed on the way :  
The year, it is o'er,  
Ye shall see it no more ;  
Have ye aught of the journey to say ?

Record ye the meed of its mercies,  
Recount ye the tale of its wealth :  
The balm of relief  
For the poignance of grief,  
The ineffable blessing of health.

He crowneth the year with His goodness,  
He filleth my lips with His praise :  
A HAPPY NEW YEAR !—  
It is here ! it is here !  
May He order your steps in His ways !

JANUARY 1, 1908.

## PRAIRIE CHICKENS

ONCE on a time,  
Upon the far Canadian veldt,  
Two little prairie chickens dwelt—  
    A happy pair :  
Two prairie chickens, did I say ?  
But how could they be *chickens*, pray,  
    With tangled hair ?  
They had no feathers, wings, or beak ;  
Who ever heard a chicken speak ?  
    Yet I declare  
These chickens talk'd, and laugh'd,—and cried,  
And many other things beside  
    (Oh, chickens rare !)  
These prairie chickens did, I'm sure  
No chickens ever did before  
    That ever were :  
They hung up stockings, I believe,  
For Santa Claus, on Christmas Eve,  
    And I despair  
To say how often they awoke  
Or ever Christmas morning broke,  
    Or what a share  
Of good things Santa Claus had bought  
And to his prairie chickens brought  
    From everywhere ;  
And when at length came Christmas night,  
These prairie chickens, robed in white,  
    Ate Christmas fare ;  
While later, at the Christmas tree,  
One chicken perched upon my knee  
    And roosted there.

\* \* \* \*

My dream is ended—be it so !  
Yet lingers still the afterglow  
    Upon the air ;  
These prairie chickens, I surmise,  
Were fairy chickens in disguise—  
    Once on a time !

## DORA IN SLUMBERLAND

DREAMING-TIME, my Dora !

Time to go to bed !

Time to shut those sleepy eyes, my little sleepy-head !

. . . . .

“Dobbin’s in the kitchen !”

(What does Dora say ?)

“Dobbin’s got into the house, and Daddy’s gone away !

“Alice, look at Dobbin !

Standing on a chair !—

Get down, Mr. Dobbin, sir ! you mustn’t stand up there !

“Dobbin’s on the table,

Eating Daddy’s glue !

Daddy’s gone to Calgary : whatever shall we do ?

“Get the teapot, Alice !

Dobbin wants a drink :

Poor old Mr. Dobbin ! is he firsty, do you fink ?

“Here, then, Mr. Dobbin !—

Alice, Alice, see !

Dobbin’s mouf is gluey and he can’t drink any tea !

“Get the kettle, Alice !

Make the water hot :

Pour it on to Dobbin’s nose, he’s sticking to the pot !

“*Woh*, then, Mr. Dobbin ! . . .

*Alice ! let him out !*”

. . . . .

Hullo, little sleepy-head ! what’s all this noise about ?

## L O S T !

OH, Alice dear ! this morning  
I took a long, long walk,  
As far as Mr. Pigpen's—  
(Hush ! Alice dear, don't talk !)  
And, tho' the sun was shining so,  
I took them with me, both, I know.

But, Alice, Alice darling !  
What could I be about ?  
I put it in my pocket—  
It must have tumbled out ;  
For when I went to put it on,  
Soon after dinner, it was gone !

But, Alice, it was precious—  
Too precious to be lost ;  
No less than half-a-dollar  
Twelve months ago it cost :  
And there was something else, I fear,  
That made it doubly precious, dear.

My thoughts—oh, how they linger !  
My fancies—how they come !  
A big hole in the finger,  
A fissure in the thumb :  
'Twas sadly worn ; but, Alice love !  
'Twas worn by thee—my mocha glove !

## A SNAPSHOT

DRAW I cannot, Dora mine !  
What shall be my valentine ?  
I've a picture in my head—  
Shall I show it you instead ?  
See, the door is open wide ;  
You may take a peep inside.  
All within is deep in dust,  
Mouldy wits, consum'd with rust ;  
Look around, and you shall see  
Nature's picture-gallery :  
Set on high upon a shelf  
Stands a portrait by itself ;  
Can that face be Dora's, pray ?  
What is that she seems to say ?  
(Don't you see it ? look again !  
In yon corner of the brain,  
Where the dust is not so thick)—  
“Daddy, would you like a lick ?”



## VALENTINE'S DAY

No malice,  
My Alice!  
My valentine bears,  
How clever  
Soever  
The semblance it wears:  
'Twere pity  
The witty  
Should fail to be wise;  
Unkindly  
(Or blindly)  
Parade in disguise.

No creatures  
With features  
Distorted and rude  
Address thee  
(God bless thee!)—  
An impudent brood:  
'Twere surely  
But poorly  
With vulgar display  
To meet thee  
And greet thee  
On Valentine's Day.

Be this, dear,  
Thy bliss, dear:  
Inspir'd from above,  
Directed,  
Protected,  
Instructed by Love,  
True learning  
Discerning,  
Enraptur'd to trace  
The beauty  
Of Duty  
Transfigur'd by Grace!

## TO DOROTHY

At five-and-a-half  
It is easy to laugh ;  
'Tis easy at seven to be smiling :  
But Nature, I ween,  
After "sweet seventeen"  
No longer is quite so beguiling.

'Tis ill to be told  
We are fast growing old—  
No more so bewitchingly simple ;  
The crow on our eyes  
As we worldly grow wise  
Sets his foot in the wake of the dimple.

You, madam, and I  
Cannot fairly deny  
We are sober, sedate, and decrepit ;  
Not now any more  
To the music of yore  
Quite so blithesomely able to step it.

## COCKADOODLEDOO !

To his chickens, flitting hence,  
Hark ! before he goes,  
Chanticleer upon the fence  
Claps his wings and crows :  
*"Cockadoodle-doodle-doo !*  
Every happiness to you !

" May you live until you die,  
Each outliving each !  
Little prairie chicks, goodbye !  
Spoken is my speech :  
*Cockadoodle-doo, my dears !*  
Blessings over head and ears !"

Hark ! from every rooster round,  
Echo'd back again,  
*Cockadoodle-doo's* resound  
In an endless strain :  
From the fence he flutters down,  
Struts away, and quits the town.

A MISS is as good as a mile, my dears!  
But better a hit than a miss:  
A kiss is as good as a smile, my dears!  
But a smile's *not* as good as a kiss!

WIRRA! WIRRA!

ARRAH, me chicks! ye grave me;  
Faith! it's mesilf that's sad;  
For sorra a taste for a wake at laste  
Of the broth of a chick I've had:  
Yet, arrah, me chicks! belave me,  
A cat may look at a king;  
The blarney-stane will I kiss alane,  
And a smoile's but a hairmless thing!

BOO-HOO! here's a looking-glass picture of me  
For Alice and Dora, my chickens, to see:  
When I gaze in it sadly and ask it for you,  
It frowns on me badly and whimpers, Boo-hoo!

Aha! here's another, which once in a while  
My looking-glass shows, with a jubilant smile:  
When I glance in it lightly and say, Here they are!  
It smiles on me brightly and whispers, Aha!

## ROVER

HERE lies "good dog" Rover ;  
Dauntless, "dear dog" Rover :  
    By odds outdone  
    Of three to one,  
His battling days are over.

Farewell ! "dear dog" Rover,  
Gamesome, "good dog" Rover,  
    Whose tail in air  
    Bade foes beware—  
Thy matchless course is over.

## UNCLEAN !

(A REVERIE)

A SINNER to the gates attains  
Of Paradise, but, for his sin,  
Without the sacred pale remains,  
With wistful vision gazing in.

Anon he enters ; cherubs, saints,  
And angels mingles he among :  
A sinner still, his spirit faints  
Amid the unaccustomed throng.

For closer fellowship he yearns,  
Yet stands apart and views the scene ;  
Anon he to the gates returns  
And passes forth—unclean ! unclean !

Awhile he lingers, gazing in,  
With wistful vision, to the light—  
A sinner laden with his sin—  
Then sinks for ever out of sight.

## FAREWELL !

HEART of mine, that silence keepest,  
Beating time to muffled chords !  
Stillest waters flow the deepest—  
Thoughts there are too deep for words.

Modest most profoundest learning ;  
Humblest sinner noblest saint ;  
Speechless is the spirit's yearning,  
Voiceless tears the heart's complaint.

Felt the more, the less paraded ;  
Told the less the more to tell :  
Flaunted grief is grief degraded—  
Heart of mine, *a last farewell !*

## HEART-BROKEN

A TWO-BUNK ward in Winnipeg,  
Two days beyond the start ;  
Companion with a broken leg,  
And I—a broken heart !

The leg is mended ; stalwart crutch  
Behold my comrade wield :  
The heart is injured overmuch  
To readily be healed.

What wonder 't should be hard to mend ?—  
Nor mend at all indeed ?  
Or that before my journey's end  
'T should have begun to bleed ?

One half my heart I cannot find—  
'Twas last at Gleichen seen ;  
It must have there been left behind,  
Or stolen must have been.

Oh, how shall I my heart repair ?  
By sending you the rest ?  
Or will you send me back your share ?—  
Which plan would be the best ?



THERE are Mother Carey's chickens on the deep  
and stormy sea,  
There are Sister Mary's chickens on the shore,  
But it's Daddy's Prairie Chickens are the only chicks  
for me!—  
Shall I see my fairy chickens any more?

## MEADOW RAMBLERS

I SEE and love to see them as they ramble in the  
fields,  
I hear and love to hear them at their play ;  
I meet and love to meet them,  
And I greet and love to greet them  
As I pass the village children in the way—  
Aye!  
I see and love to see them for the pleasure that it  
yields,  
I hear and love to hear them while I may ;  
I meet and love to meet them,  
And I greet and love to greet them,  
But—I miss my Prairie Chickens every day !

## MADE IN HEAVEN

Two little maids were romping,  
Two little maids got hurt;  
Said a stander-by, to avoid a cry  
And two little minds divert:

"Oh, they'll be smash'd to pieces!  
Two little trains—take care!"  
"Well, if I am smash'd" (looking up abash'd,  
With a serio-comic air),

"The doctor could not mend me,  
For I wasn't made down here,  
I was made in Heaven," said this maid of seven;  
"You must send the pieces there."

## ALICE

A LIFE in Christ engrafted,  
Like tender shoot in vine ;  
In God above  
Conceal'd in love,  
Engraven, Thou art Mine.

## DORA

DADDY's own rapturous armful,  
Out of the lap of the sky ;  
Restless, resistless, and charming—  
Ah, what a cherub am I !

## MA LASSIES, OH!

A KENN'D a lass, a glaefu' lass,  
Twa decades and a year ago ;  
Ma lass, ma lass, ma glaefu' lass,  
Tha lot the day how waeful, oh !

A kenn'd a lass, a bonnie lass,  
A'maist a scaur o' years ago ;  
Ma lass, ma bonnie leetle lass !  
Nae mair, alas ! a lassie, oh !

A kenn'd a lass, and aye a lass,  
A decade and a hauf ago :  
Twin lassies ; ane nae mair a lass,  
"Awa'" the ither lassie, oh !

A kenn'd a lass, a sonsie lass,  
Sax wairy, wairy months ago :  
Twa lassies ; aich a leetle lass,  
But, eh ! how fast they biggen, oh !

## SPELL-BOUND

DORA's learning spelling ;  
Soon she'll learn to read ;  
Pictures make it easy,—  
Too much so, indeed !  
          . . . . .

“C-a-t spells *pussie*—  
    (Pussie's gone to bed ;)   
D-o-g spells *Rover*—  
    (Dear old Rover's dead !)

“R-a-t spells *mousie*—  
    (My ! but mousie's big !)  
H-o-g spells *piggie*—  
    (Poor old Mr. Pig !)

“M-a-n spells *Daddy* ;  
    Y-o-u—what's that ?  
There's not any picture ;  
    Y-o-u spells—*cat* !”

No, no, Dora darling !  
    This will never do ;  
Listen, and I'll tell you—  
    Y-o-u spells *you*.

“Does it? oh, how funny!  
    Alice! come and see!  
M-a-n spells *Daddy* ;  
    Y-o-u spells *me* !”

## ANOTHER

A STRIVING in the darkness,  
A yearning for the light ;  
An earnest expectation,  
A straining of the sight.

. . . . .

A glow athwart the welkin,  
A gleam that feebly shone ;  
A light on the horizon  
That flicker'd and was gone.

A hope, an aspiration ;  
A thwarted human will :  
A heart that throb'd immortal—  
Then flutter'd and was still.

. . . . .

A rood in God's own acre,  
A Gospel-halo shed ;  
A beacon-fire enkindled,  
A radiance from the dead.

## STRICKEN

As hov'ring hawk, beyond her view,  
Conceal'd against a fleckless sky,  
His prey discerns with ruthless eye,  
Descends—a bolt from out the blue ;  
So sudden sorrow, oh, my friend !  
May from a cloudless heav'n descend.

But “ruthless”?—never ! poison'd shaft  
Ne'er left His quiver ; faith to prove,  
His arrows, barbless, wing'd with love,  
The breezes of Jehovah waft :  
For whom He loves His chast'ning hand  
But blesses—did we understand.

Not mine, oh, friend ! to dare the part  
Of skill'd physician ; mine the *rôle*  
Of healing for a stricken soul  
Or balsam for a broken heart :  
The Hand that smote, Itself shall bless—  
“ But, oh ! the gap, the loneliness.”

## ADIEU

ONE step, true heart!  
And rent apart  
The vail of separation;  
One step—but one!  
And, life's work done,  
The Master's commendation.

One step—the last!  
Life's conflict past,  
The hosts of hell defeated;  
One step—no more!  
And Canaan's shore,  
Life's pilgrimage completed.

One step!—*farewell!*  
What tongue can tell?  
Beyond the soul's conceiving,  
What bliss awaits  
Beyond the gates,  
True heart! one step's achieving.



## NOËL

My thoughts, my thoughts are vagrant on this sunlit  
Christmas-day ;

My thoughts, my thoughts are absent and astray :  
Their bonds they burst asunder and across the world  
they wander—

Oh ! my thoughts, my thoughts are truant, far  
away.

My heart, my heart is grieving at this happy  
Christmas-tide ;

My heart, my heart with Sorrow is allied :  
The bonds of Grief enthrall it and her gyves and fetters  
gall it—

Oh ! my heart, my heart hath wed a bitter bride.

My soul, my soul is stay'd upon this blessed  
Christmas thought ;

My soul, my soul, so restless and distraught :  
The thoughts of God are gracious and His Heart is  
all-capacious—

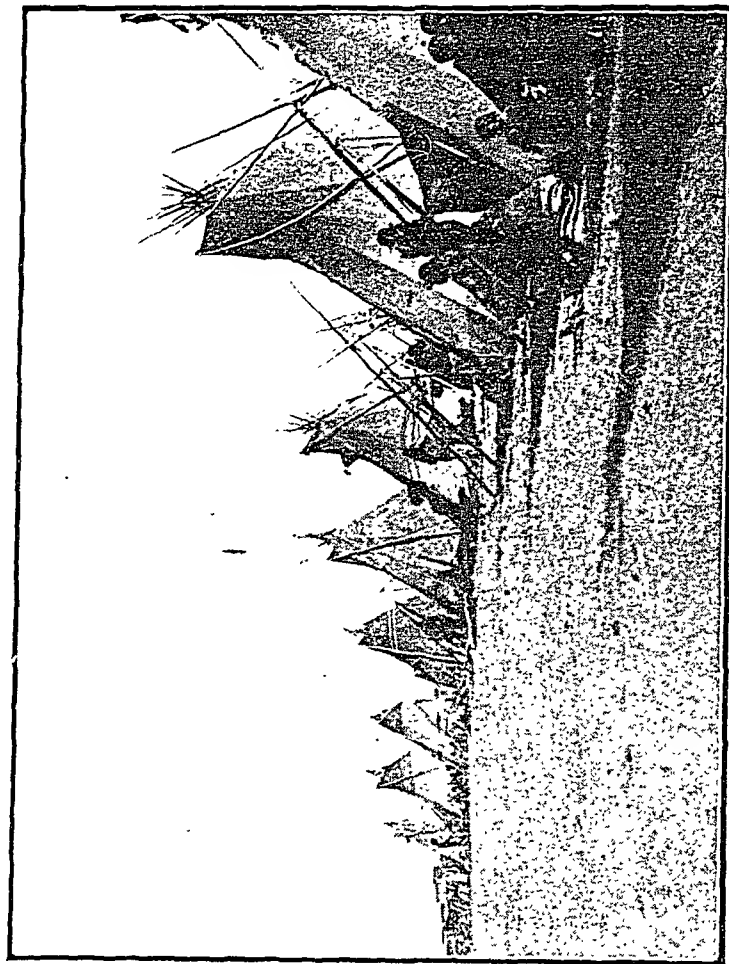
Oh ! my soul, my soul ! what great things He hath  
wrought !

## FINIS

COME, close up the volume ! the story is done,  
The Tale of the Year Nineteen Hundred and Six :  
The last page is turn'd and the record is run,  
My own little brotherless, motherless chicks !

The End !—it shall come, tho' we wait for it long,  
With eager expectance or tender regret :  
The end of the tale, the last note of the song,  
The term that to sorrow is graciously set.

Behold Father Time, where he patiently stands,  
His lips set apart a fresh story to frame,  
As slowly he opens the book in his hands—  
Oh, bright be the tale that his tongue shall proclaim !



“WHERE THE TEPEES GROW.”

## WHY SHOULD IT BE?

DEARLY I love you !  
Why should it be ?  
Out on the prairie,  
Over the sea ;  
Shrouded in silence,  
Hidden from view :  
Why should I love you ?  
Dearly I do !

How should I tell you ?  
Tongue cannot say :  
Why should I love you  
Day after day ?  
Love is a seedling ;  
How doth it grow ?  
Tongue cannot tell you ;  
How should I know ?

Hid are its rootlets ;  
Where do they lurk ?  
Who shall detect them ?  
Watch them at work ?  
Hush ! and the secret  
I will impart :  
Where are its rootlets ?—  
*Hid in my heart !*

## EOTHEN

DAWNS again mine Easter morning,  
Steal my thoughts beyond the sea,  
There to greet *thine* Easter dawning,—  
Idle thoughts of thine and thee.

Thoughts of one no more beside thee,  
One my soul no more shall greet:  
Oh, may Easter bliss betide thee!  
Easter joy be doubly sweet!

Idle thoughts of fond affection,  
Vapours of an idle brain,  
Haunt of idle recollection—  
Idle pleasure, idle pain.

Thus 'mid Easter joy discerning  
Easter bliss no longer mine,  
O'er the sea, with idle yearning,  
Steal my thoughts to thee and thine.

## SCARRED

YEARS, my dears? how many?  
Sith the deed was done:  
Nay, 'tis scanty any—  
Soothly, only one!  
Still the wound is paining,  
Lingers yet the smart;  
Sore the scar remaining  
Where 'twas torn apart.

Yea, to-day 'tis aching,  
Inly, hid from view;  
To the past awaking,  
Bleeds my heart anew:  
Yet my wound I cherish—  
Half my heart I lack,  
But the whole would perish  
Should you send it back.

E'en, I ween, as, hasting  
Homeward from the wars,  
Glow the warrior, tasting  
Glory in his scars;  
So, as unforgetful,  
Years, that tarry not,  
Carry unregretful  
Scars of love begot.

## FAIRY GOLD

WHAT, Alice pet !  
 No letter yet ?  
 Whatever can be wrong ?  
 Come, Dora chick !  
 Do, please, be quick !  
 You are so very long.

Ah, me ! ah, me !  
 What can it be ?  
 You really must make haste :  
 Oh, dear ! oh, dear !  
 I sadly fear  
 My diamonds are paste.

Alas ! alas !  
 'Tis come to pass—  
 I always knew it must !  
 My prairie pearls,  
 Like other girls,  
 Have proved to be but dust.

. . . . .

Too late, too late,  
 Malignant Fate !  
 To falsify thine art ;  
 For wealth untold  
 Of fairy gold  
 Lies bedded in my heart.

'SH!

SHALL I tell you something, Alice? shall I tell you something true?

Shall I whisper—oh, so softly! in your ear?

Shall I tell you something, Dora? will you listen if I do?

Will you keep it—oh, so secret! Dora dear?

Shall I tell you something, Chickies?—have I told you? do you know?

Have you heard it—oh, so often! Alice pet?

Have you learn'd my little secret, Dora darling, long ago?

'Sh! . . . *I love you*—oh, so dearly! Don't forget!



## PRIMITIAE

(FIRST LETTERS)

HARK! the sound as of a going  
In the topmost mulberry trees;  
Whispering voices, louder growing,  
Of the leaves upon the breeze.

Lo! a little cloud arising,  
Like a hand, from out the sea,  
Dry and thirsty lands apprising  
Of a wealth of rain to be.

See! the tender blade appearing  
Tells of Summer drawing nigh;  
Soon shall come the time of earing,  
Swell the full corn by and by.

Stirs the soldier, forward pressing;  
Grows the heaven with blackness rife;  
God with sheaves of richest blessing  
Crown the harvest-home of life!

## "US"

("A PHOTO OF US")

MY CHICKIES! how the feathers grow,  
Above the down a-creeping!  
The days, how fast they come and go,  
Beyond the strictest keeping!

My Alice! she is tall and slim,  
Her face the years beguiling;  
Tho' tears anon her eyes bedim,  
God keep my Alice smiling!

My Dora! she is—can it be  
That this is she, I wonder?  
The years, are *they* beguiling *me*?  
Has Daddy made a blunder?

My chickies! grow the feathers will!  
*Non mihi tardet hora:*  
My Alice is my Alice still;  
My Dora—where's my Dora?

## TREASURE-TROVE

ONCE upon a time, chicks,  
Long and long ago,  
In a sunny clime, chicks,  
Where the tepees grow ;  
Far and far away, chicks,  
In the golden West,  
Where the pixies play, chicks,—  
*Found ! a fairy nest.*

Soft and snug and warm, chicks,  
On the prairie laid,  
Shelter'd from the storm, chicks,  
By the pixies made ;  
Treasure, treasure-trove, chicks,  
In the days of old !  
By the fairies wove, chicks,  
Gossamer and gold.

In the golden West, chicks,  
Far and far away,  
In a fairy nest, chicks,  
Found I you to-day ;  
Where the tepees grow, chicks,  
In a sunny clime,  
Long and long ago, chicks,  
Once upon a time.

**S**PEED, speed, little book, from the bounds of th  
birth,

On the wings of the wind, to the ends of the earth  
Where, 'mid tepees and wigwams, papooses an  
squaws,

Two chicks of the prairie sit crown'd in thy cause